

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 11529 040657Z

17

ACTION SS-15

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 SSO-00 CCO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00

PRS-01 /029 W

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O 040537Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8387

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 11529

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (ROBINSON, CHARLES W.)

SUBJECT: DEPSEC VISIT MANILA - BRIEFING PAPER: FOREIGN POLICY

REF: MANILA 11484

1. PRESIDENT MARCOS HAS DEFINED PHILIPPINE FOREIGN POLICY AS ONE OF WINNING NEW FRIENDSAMONG COMMUNIST AND THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME KEEPING OLD ONES (E.G., THE UNITED STATES). RECENTLY THE GOP HAS EMPHASIZED NEW FRIENDSHIPS AND THE NEED TO ELIMINATE HISTORIC OVERDEPENDENCE ON THE UNITED STATES. BACKGROUND FACTORS INCLUDE: (A) PHILIPPINE DOUBTS ABOUT RELIABILITY OF THE UNITED STATES RESULTING FROM THE VIETNAM DEBACLE; (B) THE NEED FOR BETTER RELATIONS WITH THE ISLAMIC WORLD TO GUARANTEE OIL SUPPLIES AND TO MINIMIZE EXTERNAL SUPPORT FOR THE MUSLIM REBELLION IN MINDANAO AND (C) AN EMOTIONAL COMPULSION TO APPEAR LESS ALIGNED IN THE EYES OF ASEAN NEIGHBORS AND THE THIRD WORLD. HOWEVER, MARCOS REMAINS KEENLY AWARE OF THE ENORMOUS POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC UTILITY OF THE AMERICAN CONNECTION AND ITS CONTINUING POPULARITY AMONG HIS OWN PEOPLE AND WILL GUIDE HIS ACTIONS ACCORDINGLY.

2. RELATIONS WITH COMMUNIST POWERS: THE PHILIPPINES ESTABLISHED DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA IN MAY 1975, WITH THE SOVIET UNION IN JUNE 1976, AND WITH THE SOCIALIST REPUBLIC OF

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MANILA 11529 040657Z

VIETNAM LAST JULY 12. THE GOP HAD PLANNED TO NORMALIZE

WITH PEKING AND MOSCOW SIMULTANEOUSLY, BUT MARCOS APPARENTLY DECIDED THAT A VISIBLE BIAS IN FAVOR OF HIS NEAR NEIGHBOR WOULD DO NO HARM. DURING THE RECENT VISIT OF THE VIETNAMESE ENVOY PHAN HIEN, THE PHILIPPINES ESTABLISHED RELATIONS WITH THE SRV ON THE BASIS THAT "NEITHER COUNTRY WILL ALLOW ANY FOREIGN COUNTRY TO USE ONE'S TERRITORY AGAINST THE OTHER COUNTRY OR OTHER COUNTRIES IN THE REGION." THE VIETNAMESE DID NOT INSIST, AS THEY HAD IN AUGUST 1975, ON SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE UNITED STATES, NOR DID THEY DEMAND AS A PRECONDITION THE RETURN OF EX-GVN MILITARY HARDWARE. MUCH TO THE RELIEF OF MARCOS, PHAN HIEN STATED THAT THE SPRATLY DISPUTE SHOULD BE SETTLED BY PEACEFUL MEANS. DESPITE RECENT EMPHASIS ON SWEETNESS AND LIGHT, MANY ORDINARY FILIPPINOS AND GOVERNMENT SECURITY OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN UNEASE AT THE HASTY PACE OF NORMALIZATION WITH THE COMMUNIST WORLD. THE GOP IS WELL AWARE THAT THE COMMUNIST POWERS MAY NOT HAVE ABANDONED THEIR TRADITIONAL SUPPORT FOR INSURGENCY.

3. ASEAN: THE GOP PUTS GROWING STORE IN ASEAN AS A CORNERSTONE OF PHILIPPINE DIPLOMACY. THE GOP HAS EXPRESSED APPROVAL OF A GREATER SECURITY ROLE FOR ASEAN, BUT ITS REAL POTENTIAL IN PHILIPPINE EYES IS ECONOMIC. HERE THE PHILIPPINES HAS SIDED WITH SINGAPORE IN CALLING FOR ACCELERATED FREE TRADE AND HAS BEEN CRITICAL OF INDO-CHINESE FOOT-DRAGGING ON THIS SCORE. GOP TECHNOCRATS ARE CONFIDENT, WITH REASON, THAT THE PHILIPPINES WILL BE ABLE TO PLAY A LEADING ROLE IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC ENDEAVORS. ON THE POLITICAL SIDE, THERE IS PRESENTLY RENEWED HOPE THAT THE DISPUTE WITH MALAYSIA OVER THE PHILIPPINES' DORMANT CLAIM TO SABAH MAY AT LAST BE RESOLVED AS A RESULT OF INFORMAL INTER-ASEAN CONSULTATIONS.

4. SPRATLY ISLANDS: THE PHILIPPINES CLAIMS A PORTION OF THE DISPUTED SPRATLY ISLANDS AND HAS INITIATED OIL DRILLING THERE. (AMOCO HAS A SHARE IN THE DRILLING CONSORTIUM.) OTHER CLAIMANTS TO THE SCATTERED SOUTH CHINA SEA ISLETS INCLUDE CHINA (BOTH PRC AND ROC) AND CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 MANILA 11529 040657Z

VIETNAM. BOTH THE PRC AND SRV HAVE RECENTLY INDICATED THAT THEY BELIEVE THE DISPUTE SHOULD BE SETTLED BY PEACEFUL MEANS. HOWEVER, THE GOP IS NOT ENTIRELY REASSURED AND ROMULO MAY VISIT PEKING FOLLOWING THE UNGA SESSION, WITH THE SPRATLY QUESTION ON THE AGENDA. WE DOUBT THAT THE DISPUTE WILL BECOME SERIOUS UNLESS OIL IS FOUND. THUS FAR, DRILLING IN THE DISPUTED AREAS HAS PRODUCED SOME SHOWS. THESE HAVE

BEEN TRUMPETED BY THE GOP, BUT INDEPENDENT SOURCES
REGARD THE RESULTS WITH CAUTION.

5. NON-ALIGNED CONFERENCE: THE PHILIPPINES HAS BEEN
LOBBYING TO ATTAIN OBSERVER STATUS AT THE AUGUST NAC
MEETING IN COLOMBO, BUT WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE CHANCES
ARE SLIGHT. THE INDIANS ARE REPORTEDLY INSISTENT THAT
NO NATION WITH A BILATERAL DEFENSE TREATY CAN BE
"NON-ALIGNED." WHETHER OR NOT COLOMBO IS A DISAPPOINT-
MENT, THE GOP WILL CONTINUE STRIVING TO BE ACCEPTED AS
A FULL-FLEDGED MEMBER OF THE THIRD WORLD.
SULLIVAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MANILA11529
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760299-1304
From: MANILA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760888/aaaaczil.tel
Line Count: 127
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MANILA 11484
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 MAY 2004 by ElyME>; APPROVED <01 SEP 2004 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEPSEC VISIT MANILA - BRIEFING PAPER: FOREIGN POLICY
TAGS: OVIP, (ROBINSON, CHARLES W)
To: CANBERRA
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006